

Peacebuilding Commission
Steering Group of the Liberian Country Specific Configuration

Chairperson's Summary

Background

At the end of January, 2011, the Chairperson invited Members of the Configuration to consider undertaking a more concrete role in the context of their membership in the Configuration. Nine (9) Members have agreed to work with the Chair to help ensure that the PBC realizes the commitments agreed upon in the Statement of Mutual Commitment (SMC). Members of this open-ended "steering group" meet on an informal basis. China, European Union, Ghana, Ireland, Japan, Liberia, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States have accepted to join the steering group which is open to any Member of the Configuration.

Discussions in and Conclusions of the steering group

To date 4 meetings of the steering group have taken place: 16 February, 4 March, 16 March and 12 April. The purposes of the first two meetings were held in preparation and follow-up to the Chair's recent missions to Washington, D.C., Brussels and Liberia. Issues discussed include: Peacebuilding Priority Plan and its accompanying programme document, mission to ECOWAS, national reconciliation, and inclusion of courts in the premises of the hub. In large part the discussions in the steering group informed the findings and points put forward in the Chair's mission reports.

The meeting on 16 March, was attended by most of the Members of the Configuration, Ellen Margrethe Løj, SRSG and Moustafa Soumare DSRSG of UNMIL, Dmitry Titov, ASG for DPKO OROLSI, Jordan Ryan ASG, Assistant Administrator and Director of BCPR UNDP, Ejeviome Otobo, Director and Deputy Head of PBSO and members of the UN Team that supported the drafting of the programme document, participated. The DSRSG provided an update on the process that led to a zero draft Liberia Peacebuilding Programme, clarifying that the document had been widely shared for comments which were in the process of being incorporated by the Government.

The zero draft was assessed as having expanded beyond the confines of the SMC and having high funding estimations that could prove challenging for resource mobilization, implementation and sustainability. Two main points of guidance have been provided for the revision process: prioritize among the priorities using the SMC as the basis and downsize the amount of funding.

Following an exchange of views on the process and the role of the PBC, it was agreed that 1) the revised draft of the programme document would be shared with the Members of the Configuration for their comments and 2) the UN co-chair of the JSC, in consultation with the Government co-chair, would invite the Chair of the Configuration to periodically participate in JSC when warranted.

On April 12, the fourth meeting of the steering group was held with the participation of the Minister of Justice. This meeting met in advance of the Informal Country Specific Configuration meeting to enable Members of the steering group to examine in greater detail three issues that had been discussed in previous steering group meetings: the first Justice and Security Regional Hub project, the implications of the Côte d'Ivoire crisis for Liberia and transnational crime.

The briefing by the Minister enabled PBC members to gained greater clarity on the debate over the location of the courts in relation to the Regional Hub premise and on the status of implementation. Details on these matters are available in the Chair's Summary of the April 12 Informal Configuration Meeting. Members expressed their interest to assist the Liberian Government in its response to the Ivorian crisis. Lastly, the Minister informed Members of the existence of a special court for corruption based in Montserrado County that is greatly in need of technical support. It was also highlighted that legislative efforts, of relevance to transnational crime, are also underway: review of laws on money laundering and possession of drugs.